

**Summary of Travel Regulations for Invitational Travelers**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)**  
**U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC)**

Travel regulations for NOAA are based primarily upon the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR), followed by the DOC Travel Regulation (CTR), and the NOAA Travel Regulation (NTR).

Travel regulations and information may be found at the NOAA Travel Website:  
<http://www.ofa.noaa.gov/~finance/travel.html>

Approved travel authorizations are required prior to incurring travel expenses.

Travelers must exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business.

Travelers are responsible to know the regulations governing travel and to submit accurate and factual vouchers for reimbursement of travel expenses.

Travelers are responsible for expenses over the reimbursement limits established by regulation. NOAA will not pay for excess costs resulting from circuitous routes, delays, or luxury accommodations, or services unnecessary or unjustified in the performance of official business.

Reservations for common carrier transportation, lodging, and rental car must be made through NOAA's contracted travel management service provider, currently SATO.

NOAA may pay only those expenses essential to the transaction of official business, which include:

**Transportation expenses**

- Expenses paid as transportation are fares, rental fees, mileage payments, and other expenses related to transportation, including reasonable tips to a taxi, shuttle service, or courtesy transportation driver.

- Methods of transportation are common carrier transportation (e.g., aircraft, train, bus, ship, or local transit system), Government vehicle, privately-owned vehicle (POV), or special conveyance (e.g., taxi or commercial rental car).
- Common carrier is presumed to be the most advantageous method of transportation and must be used when reasonably available.
- Important:** Tickets for common carrier transportation, exceeding \$100, **must** be purchased through SATO, and charged to the centrally-billed charge card account or to a Government/contractor issued, individually-billed charge card. Reimbursement will be **disallowed** for tickets which exceed \$100, purchased with a personal form of payment.
- Travelers are responsible for additional expenses when using transportation method not required or selected by NOAA.
- Travelers are limited to the cost of travel by a direct route or on an uninterrupted basis or will be responsible for any additional costs.
- When combining official and personal travel, the official portion of the ticket must be purchased through SATO. Then, the traveler can go directly to the airline to add additional points of travel to the ticket at their own expense.
- When a personal ticket is purchased first, the traveler should turn their personal ticket in so that SATO can issue an official ticket. Government contract fares may not be used for personal travel. Travelers are responsible for any additional costs above the Government fare.
- Travelers are required to use United States flag air carriers.
- Ground transportation to and from common carrier terminals is reimbursable.
- Use of a privately-owned vehicle (POV) will be reimbursed at the rate of 40.5 cents per mile.
- Special conveyances, i.e., taxicabs and commercial rental cars, must be specifically approved on the travel authorization.
- Rental cars should be reserved through SATO so that special Government rates are used and to ensure full insurance coverage provided under the Government Rental Car Agreement. If a traffic accident occurs or other damage to the rental car, the traveler is required to notify

- the rental car company. Also, in the case of a traffic accident, a police report should be provided to the rental car company.
- Travelers should refuel rental cars before returning to the car rental location to avoid additional refueling charges and premium prices.
  - Travelers are responsible for any additional cost resulting from unauthorized use of a rental car for other than official travel-related use.
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**Per diem expenses ( per diem rates are posted at the website, above)**

- Travelers are entitled to per diem when performing official travel away from their official station (defined by NOAA as more than 50 miles from a traveler's official duty station or residence) or other areas defined by NOAA; when incurring per diem expenses while performing official travel; and when in a travel status for more than 12 hours.
- Travelers temporary duty (TDY) location determines the maximum per diem reimbursement rate. If arriving at your lodging location after 12 midnight, lodging costs for the preceding calendar day are claimed.
- Per diem entitlement starts on the day you depart home, office, or other authorized point and ends on the day you return to your home, office, or other authorized point.
- When lodging expenses are prepaid and travel is curtailed, canceled, or interrupted for official purposes or for other reasons beyond the traveler's control that are acceptable to NOAA, approving officials may reimburse travel expenses that are not refundable, if steps were taken by the traveler to minimize the cost. Travelers are expected to cancel or change lodging reservations when necessary.
- Receipts are required for lodging expenses.
- Lodging taxes are reimbursable as a miscellaneous expense and are limited to taxes on reimbursable lodging costs.
- Certain localities offer tax exempt status. Visit the NOAA Travel website for tax exempt forms.

- Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) are paid as follows:
  - 75% of M&IE rate for travel more than 12 hours but less than 24 hours; or
  - 75% of M&IE for day of departure
  - 100% of M&IE for full days of travel
  - 75% of M&IE for last day of travel

### **Actual Subsistence**

- Actual subsistence, instead of per diem, may be specifically approved on the travel authorization when:
  - Lodging and/or meals are procured at a prearranged place such as a hotel where a meeting, conference or training session is held;
  - Costs have escalated because of special events (e.g., missile launching periods, sporting events, World's Fair, conventions, natural disasters); lodging and meal expenses within prescribed allowances cannot be obtained nearby; and costs to commute to/from the nearby location consume most or all of the savings achieved from occupying less expensive lodgings;
  - Because of mission requirements; or
  - Any other reason approved by the appropriate approving official.

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### **Miscellaneous expenses**

- General Miscellaneous expenses are:
  - Baggage expenses (specifically approved on the travel authorization and supported by a receipt on the travel voucher) as follows:
    - Transportation charges for authorized excess
    - Necessary charges for transferring baggage
    - Necessary charges for storage of baggage when such charges are the result of official business
    - Charges for checking baggage
    - Charges or tips at transportation terminals for handling Government property carried by the traveler
  - Services of guides, interpreters, and drivers

Use of computers, printers, faxing machines, and scanners  
Services of typists, data processors, or stenographers  
Storage of property used on official business  
Hire of conference center room or hotel room for official business  
Official telephone calls/service, faxes, telegrams, cablegrams, or radiograms

Personal telephones calls are reimbursable and limited to \$6.00 a day for domestic travel, \$12.00 a day for foreign travel, or as set by the approving official of the travel authorization. Travelers are required to limit personal calls while on official travel to a reasonable duration and frequency.

Lodging taxes

Laundry, cleaning and pressing of clothing expenses, when in a travel status for four or more nights

Energy surcharge and lodging resort fee(s), when such fee(s) is/are not optional

-Fees to obtain money

Fees for travelers checks

Fees for money orders

Fees for certified checks

-Special expense of foreign travel

Commissions on conversion of foreign currency

Passport and/or visa fees

Costs of photographs for passports and visas

Cost of birth, health, and identity certificates

Charges for inoculations that cannot be obtained through a Federal dispensary

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**Travel Authorizations** must include specific authorization for use of:

Premium-class service on common carrier transportation

A foreign air carrier

Reduced fares for group or charter arrangements

Extra-fare train service

Travel by ship

Rental car

Government aircraft

Also:

- Payment of reduced per diem rate
- Payment of actual expense, instead of per diem
- Travel expenses related to emergency travel
- Travel expenses related to travel to a foreign area
- Acceptance of payment from a non-Federal source for travel expenses (Under no circumstances will a traveler accept cash for official travel expenses)
- Travel expenses related to attendance at a conference

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### **Travel Advances**

- Travel advances may be authorized to pay for official travel expenses of invitational travelers on official travel.
- Invitational travelers who are entitled to receive travel advances are limited to 80% of the estimated cash expenses of the travel authorization.
- The approving official will submit a travel advance form and a travel authorization to the servicing finance office. The travel advance will be deposited directly to the traveler's bank account within 2 - 3 days (notify the servicing finance office for direct deposit set-up).

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### **Travel Vouchers**

- Travel vouchers must be submitted within 5 working days after completion of travel or, for extended duty travel, immediately following each 30-day travel period.
- Travel claims must include:
  - A travel voucher, properly completed, signed by the traveler, and signed by the approving official
  - A Travel Authorization, including any necessary special authorizations
- Receipts for:
  - All lodging expenses
  - Any other expense costing over \$75.

-NOAA will disallow payment of a claimed item when the following is not provided:

Proper itemization of expenses

Receipt supporting claim

or, when an expense has not been authorized.

-An amended Travel Voucher may be submitted for disallowed item(s), when item(s) are properly approved and are supported by proper itemization and receipts.

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### **Promotional Materials and Frequent Traveler Programs**

-Any promotional benefits or materials received from a travel service provider in connection with official travel may be retained for personal use, if such items are obtained under the same conditions as those offered to the general public and at no additional cost to the Government.